

Review: 3rd Conference of the German Network of Forced Migration Researchers

With more than 940 registered participants from 49 countries and 98 individual events, the 3rd conference of the German Network of Forced Migration Researchers "Contexts of Displacement, Refugee Protection and Forced Migrants' Lives" took place from 17 to 19 September 2020. In panels, workshops and roundtable talks, participants discussed current research findings and took the opportunity to exchange ideas and network. The organisers had invited two distinguished keynote speakers, Christina Clark-Kazak and Naika Foroutan. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisers, the Chair for Youth Welfare and Social Work at the University of Cologne and the board of the German Network of Forced Migration Researchers in cooperation with the project "Forced Migration and Refugee Studies: Networking and Knowledge Transfer (FFVT)", held the event as an online conference.

The individual events took place via the video conference tool "Zoom". To prepare the moderators and speakers for the virtual format in the best possible way, BICC as a partner within the FFVT project organised training sessions for them in advance by subcontracting cidpartners Ltd. This allowed the participants to familiarise themselves with the functions of "Zoom" and helped them to adequately plan their contributions. In addition, FFVT facilitated the generation of a conference app through the live format developer On the Rock. The app allowed for various activities during the conference: for example, to view scientific posters and artists' contributions; exchange opinions via its chat function and spontaneously attend sessions that were not booked out.

In the individual events that were either in English or in German, a variety of topics were discussed, such as migrant organisations' engagement in local refugee work, quantitative research in Forced Migration and Refugee Studies or the life worlds of displaced children and young people.

After the opening plenary in the afternoon of the 1st conference day, Christina Clark-Kazak (University of Ottawa) sparked the discussion with her keynote "The future of Forced Migration Research? Ethics and methods in politicised (im)mobility contexts". She addressed four key questions: What is unique about forced migration research? What are the ethical opportunities and challenges of our work? How can we as researchers (in and outside of academia) respond? Where do we go from here? Christina Clark-Kazak emphasised that the research field moves between the poles of mobility and immobility and is highly politicised. The speaker referred to the various legal concepts and definitions used in relation to refugees and migrants and therefore urged right at the beginning of the conference that fundamental methodological questions be considered.

In her keynote on the 2nd day of the event, Naika Foroutan (Humboldt-University Berlin, Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research BIM) spoke about "Fluchtmigration und Aushandlungsprozesse in der postmigrantischen Gesellschaft" (Forced migration and negotiation processes in post-migrant society). In her presentation, the speaker explored the question of how to explain Germany's defence against migration. Naika Foroutan discussed this topic mainly on the basis of three research questions and hypotheses from migration research. She addressed the question whether it is the increasing number of migrants or an increasing hybridisation of society that causes fear of plurality and identity.

In one of the roundtable talks, researchers presented the joint project Forced Migration and Refugee Studies: Networking and Knowledge Transfer (FFVT), which receives funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) for five years. FFVT aims to strengthen the research field through internationalisation, networking activities and the expansion of teaching. Initial ideas for future workshops and cooperation projects already emerged from discussions with interested participants. Elke Grawert, project coordinator at BICC, the Bonn-based peace and conflict research institute, emphasised: **"We do not want to conduct research in an ivory tower, but to exchange ideas with actors from the field. This gives us the opportunity to take up new ideas and promote the development of structures"**.

Would you like to learn more about FFVT? The presentation of the project by Elke Grawert, as part of the virtual poster session of the 3rd conference of the German Network of Forced Migration Researchers, is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJU2zyS2n7E>

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